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ABSTRACT

This paper explores ways in which education programs can improve their screening of master's degree candidates. It examines information obtained from principals and assistant principals in El Paso, Texas for the purpose of understanding what effective campus administrators should know and be able to do. The Delphi process was used in this study to arrive at a group position regarding an issue and was also employed to create a 28-item survey instrument that identified the essential elements of an effective principal preparation program. The resultant instrument, the "Principal Preparation Program Survey," was then administered to 226 practicing principals/assistant principals in the three largest school districts in El Paso. Factor analysis produced six categories of skills for administrators: (1) technical skills influenced by human relations; (2) technical skills influenced by legal mandates; (3) creating an inviting culture; (4) building community; (5) ethics in practice; and (6) understanding relationships. Together, the technical-skills factors accounted for 38.2 percent of the total variance, incorporating 14 of the 28 items on the survey. The results suggest that the principalship is the art of leadership in an atmosphere of chaos and that preparation programs can teach technical skills but should also emphasize the intangible factors represented in categories 3 to 6. (The survey instrument appears in an appendix.) Contains 31 references. (RJM)

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View from the Field:
The Principal's Perspective on Effective School Leadership Characteristics

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View from the Field:
The Principal's Perspective on Effective School Leadership Characteristics

"Schools can be exciting, challenging, fulfilling places if the people in them believe in themselves enough to make them that way."
-- Robert J. Starratt

Introduction

Schools are multi-faceted organizations. Achieving and sustaining a high quality institution within a complex environment demands that the principal, as school leader, possess a wide range of leadership capabilities; however, most university principal preparation programs have consisted of a "collection of courses" students take at their convenience. Articulating the curriculum was unheard of, and planned, thoughtful course-taking rarely occurred (Achilles, 1987). Today, efforts are underway to improve the fragmented approach to principal preparation. Increasingly, people are recognizing that if educational leaders are to better serve schools and students in our rapidly changing society, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they possess must be different than those reflected in traditional educational administration curricula. Successful school reform cannot take place apart from a better understanding of school leadership (Daresh & Barnett, 1993). Consequently, educational administration preparation programs need to change--they need to become more reflective of the roles campus leaders play. As Milstein (1993) asserts, "[This] challenge calls for strong and creative leadership...it calls for a reconceptualization of how educational leaders are prepared" (p. vii).

Historically, the principalship has not always been defined as a leadership role. The earliest principalships revolved more around unlocking school house doors and managing daily

routines than inspiring teachers and students. According to Beck and Murphy (1993), "Principals were assumed to be more like business executives, using good management and social science research to run schools effectively and efficiently."

But today, society is beginning to acknowledge school leadership as a complex, multi-task and multi-faceted journey. Unfortunately, the path by which school leaders prepare for the principalship is often fragmented and uncertain. Entry is usually through self-selection, and more often than not, pre-service training is dominated by students who "want to get the certificate, just in case...". Education administration programs generally accept students, as long as they "have a pulse, possess sufficient financial resources, a completed baccalaureate degree, and the ability to complete the paper requirements for entrance. This 'batch feed' approach to student selection appears inspired by the plaque on the Statue of Liberty which invited the 'huddled masses' to our shores" (Daresh, 1996). Universities often permit virtual open admissions for masters level candidates while priding themselves on the rigor of the doctoral student selection process; however, since most individuals who step into the principalship will never attain a doctorate in education, the focus should be on the principal preparation process at the masters level certification program, for it is this group which will have the largest impact on schools (Daresh, 1996). The question then becomes, "What should effective campus administrators know and be able to do?"

Problem Statement

The University of Texas at El Paso's department of Educational Leadership and Foundations is currently reviewing its educational administration masters degree program, assessing courses and internship experiences to determine how they fit with the six goals of the

Learner-Centered Proficiencies adopted by the Texas State Board of Education in 1994 to guide licensure of future principals. The goal is to align the program with the *Learner-Centered Proficiencies*, thus making the learning process a more meaningful, thoughtful, and reflective educational experience for the region's future school leaders.

El Paso, Texas, is part of a rapidly growing binational, bicultural community. With a population of approximately 600,000, it is the fourth largest city in Texas, and is one of the state's fastest growing metropolitan areas. Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, directly across the Rio Grande, has a population of over 1.2 million, creating a binational metropolitan area of approximately two million people. El Paso is at the forefront of demographic trends that are rapidly changing the face of US society. The city's population is currently estimated to be 70 percent Hispanic, 23 percent non-Hispanic white, 4 percent African-American, 1 percent Asian, and 2 percent "other." Almost one-fourth of El Paso's population is foreign born, and over 50 percent of the region's households speak Spanish as the primary language. In addition, an estimated 30 percent of the adult population is functionally illiterate. El Paso is one of the poorest metropolitan regions in the United States (Parra & Daresh, 1997).

The city's diverse population demands that the University acknowledge the importance of interacting with all stakeholders concerned with public education: administrators, parents, school board members, teachers, students, and community members. The goal of this paper is to address the information gained after obtaining data from one important group of stakeholders: administrators (principals and assistant principals) currently assigned to campuses throughout the El Paso region.

Review of Literature

Theories of leadership provide evidence to support the contention that there is considerable confusion regarding the nature and function of leaders. There seems to be little agreement, not only on what comprises the basic definition of the word "leadership," but also what criteria constitute "effective leadership."

An examination of the literature surrounding the principalship yields little consistency among authorities regarding the actual nature of that role. A quarter of a century ago, Lipham and Hoeh (1974) described the principal's role as one which is continuously defined and redefined through the daily interactions of the individuals and reference groups with whom he/she works; in addition, role descriptions were derived from historical-legal precedents, the professional literature, and school district policies. Cordeiro (1994) claims that most research on the principalship has not captured the themes which bind successful principals together with their schools; however, she encourages principals to be generalists, developing their abilities to collaboratively distribute and coordinate leadership opportunities. According to Crow, Matthews, and McCleary (1996), a principal should also be adept at exhibiting "follower" behavior, thereby assuming both an enactor and an encourager role. As enactors, principals influence others to consider innovative approaches to strengthening culture and vision formation, which, in turn, will lead to school improvement. As encouragers, principals champion the development of the teacher, and others, as leaders in creating school change.

It is not surprising that role conflict develops when significant differences emerge between the actual behavior of a principal and that which is idealized (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974). A definitive understanding of the campus leader's multifaceted role appears somewhat elusive—an

apparent need exists to further clarify the role of the principal if leadership preparation programs are to be truly effective. Indeed, according to Daresh and Playko (1992), problems with role clarification are concerns voiced by many aspiring and beginning principals. Now that they are principals--who are they, and how are they supposed to make use of their authority?

Kellams (1979) suggests that the role of the principal in US schools is an evolving one. Role definition is problematic because the principal's job description is a working, evolving document--there is no clear and fixed interpretation. Mackler (1996) proposes that the principalship is more often viewed as the transition from *manager* of a productive present to *facilitator* of change. The manager's role honors stability, manageability, and finite accomplishments; while the facilitator embraces action, shared decision making, and a focus on the future. Erickson and Reller (1979) conclude that despite all the fluctuating and often contradictory expectations, the principalship is one of the most durable and critical positions in the administration of American schools. Regardless of variations in the size and location of schools, differences in the personalities and experiential backgrounds of principals, and diverse socioeconomic circumstances of children served, "the building principal remains the administrator most closely associated with the daily operations of the school, with the implementation of curriculum, and its association with the community" (p. 22).

Lipham, in his examination of the role of the principal sponsored by the Georgia Department of Education, concluded that the "principal is a significant internal change agent and a crucial linkage agent for the school (Ruth Wright and Pat Renihan, 1986, Personal Information [On-line]).

Principal Preparation Programs

A review of the literature indicates that administrator training has failed to keep pace with changing times and changing expectations of leaders. As the National Association for Secondary School Principals publication, *Developing School Leaders: A Call For Collaboration* (1992), notes, "Preparation programs in educational administration have been locked into modes of thinking and structures of practice that have been overtaken by changes in the environment" [NASSP on-line]. More than two decades ago, Lipham and Hoeh (1974) discussed the use of simulation exercises to improve college preparatory courses for principals; however, the complexity of implementing such activities caused them to fall out of favor for a number of years. Only recently has the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) begun to study how it might develop simulation exercises that could realistically be incorporated into principal preparation programs (Information Environment for School Leadership Preparation, UCEA [On-line]).

Although some administrative preparation programs strive to connect the relationship between theory and practice in students' minds by offering internships or mentorships, in many cases, this simply does not happen (Lumsden, 1992). It is a concern that some administrator training programs do not adequately prepare prospective principals for the hectic pace and varied content of the job. Strengthening aspiring principals' conflict resolution skills, face-to-face communication skills, as well as educating trainees about the emotional demands of the principalship should be high priorities in administrative preparation programs (Anderson, 1991). Achilles, Keedy, and High (1994) admit, though, that while most principal pre-service programs

include work on problem solving, very few have formally structured the concepts of problem finding/problem posing into their curriculum.

Contemporary schools differ from past schools, and future schools will depart significantly from present-day schools. Success or failure of a campus will depend on how the principal, the key change agent, chooses to undertake the myriad of leadership roles thrust upon him/her. Principal preparation programs must prepare future campus administrators to successfully meet such a challenge.

Methodology

The Delphi process was applied to gather information from a group of "expert" (practicing) principals throughout the El Paso region. Their input was solicited because they interact with the city's diverse population on a daily basis and principals have a unique understanding of the region's educational demands.

The Delphi method is a technique used to arrive at a group position regarding an issue under investigation. It employs a series of mailed questionnaires to a group of "experts" whose opinions and judgments are of great interest. After the initial questionnaire is returned, researchers condense the data and mail it out for a second round of feedback from the "experts." The subjects are encouraged to reconsider and adapt previous replies to the instrument. After two or three rounds, the group position is determined by condensing the data into appropriate categories.

The Delphi process resembles the ethnographic interview in that informants are free to take on the role of the "expert." It increases the legitimacy of predicted findings and also increases opportunities for discovering unexpected themes. If information anticipated by

researchers emerges without the use of leading questions, it confirms that the topics are of importance to the respondents. In addition, the technique is excellent for identifying factors, situations, concepts, and interpretations that the researcher has not anticipated. The qualitative data thus gathered through Delphi interviews provides legitimate ideas for survey item development (Bauman & Adair, 1992).

In this study, sixty subjects were nominated by their peers as administrators who understand the complexities of school leadership. An invitation was sent to each nominee, with an explanation of the process and the time commitment involved; thirty nominees agreed to participate. The question asked of the "expert" administrators was the following, "What curriculum components do you think should be included in an effective principal preparation program?"

Data collected through the Delphi process were then used to create a Likert-style survey designed to assess administrator's views regarding the critical components of an effective principal preparation program. The five point Likert scale ranged from 1 to 5 (1-irrelevant, 2-not critical, 3-somewhat important, 4-critical, 5-extremely critical). The researchers grouped the twenty-eight items created from the Delphi data into three categories: *Increase of Knowledge* (addresses theory development), *Formation of Attitudes and Values* (addresses value formation), and *Development of Skills* (addresses technical/managerial skills).

The resultant instrument, entitled *Principal Preparation Program Survey* (Appendix), was administered to 226 practicing principals/assistant principals in the three largest school districts in El Paso, Texas. All principals were surveyed at their monthly district meetings. Of 161 principals in the three districts, 145 participated (90% response rate). The instrument was

then sent via school mail to assistant principals in two of the three districts. Eighty-one of the 110 assistant principals responded (74% response rate). Assistant principals in the third school district were not sampled, as that district's policy does not permit the use of school mail for outside survey research.

Factor analysis was conducted on the 226 completed surveys to discover the underlying constructs defined by the items in the survey--according to the perceptions of practicing administrators in El Paso, Texas. Those constructs were then compared to the three categories of the items on the survey (*Increase of Knowledge*, *Formation of Attitudes and Values*, and *Development of Skills*), and also to the six *Learner-Centered Proficiencies for Administrators* mandated by the State Board of Education as the foundation for principal preparation/certification programs in Texas.

Exploratory factor analysis was used to summarize the interrelationships among the survey items (variables) in an accurate manner to aid conceptualization of key components (Gorsuch, 1983, p.2) that practicing administrators believe to be important for an effective principal preparation program. Data was screened for the presence of outliers, for multicollinearity and singularity, and factorability of the correlation matrix was determined prior to extraction of the factors. Principal components extraction with varimax rotation was performed on 28 items from the *Principal Preparation Program Survey* using SPSS.

Results

Six factors were extracted using the Kaiser or eigenvalue criterion--eigenvalues greater than or equal to one (Kim & Mueller, 1978, p. 49). The factors accounted for 57.9% of the variance in the original 28 variables. The cutoff for interpreting a loading was set at a low absolute value of

.32 (10% overlapping variance). According to Tabachnick & Fidell (1996), when scores on observed variables are homogeneous, these lower loadings are warranted (p. 677). Since the data for this study was obtained from practicing administrators, and the instrument was designed using prior research with "expert" principals, the homogeneous scores were expected.

Table I below lists the labeled factors and the percents of variance they contributed to the solution. A detailed table which shows the loadings of variables on factors, communalities, percents of variance, and reliability coefficients for the factors and entire scale can be found in Table II (Appendix). The variables are arranged by size of loading; loadings under .32 are replaced by zeroes, and interpretative labels for the underlying constructs which comprise the factors are provided.

Table I - Factor Labels/Percents of Variance

Factor Label	Percent of Variance
1. Technical Skills Influenced by Human Relations	30.5%
2. Technical Skills Influenced by Legal Mandates	7.7%
3. Creating the Inviting Culture	5.6%
4. Building Community	5.3%
5. Ethics in Practice	4.6%
6. Understanding Relationships	4.2%

An oblique rotation was then conducted to determine if any of the factors correlated with one another. The direct oblimin method (delta set at 0) produced correlations between factors one and three equal to .230; factors three and five correlated .247; and factors four and six correlated .308. Because these correlations were very modest and below the recommended value of .32 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 674), an oblique rotation was not warranted. The othogonal rotation was chosen over the complexities of interpreting an oblique solution.

The alpha reliability coefficient for the entire scale was .92. Four of the six factors were internally consistent and well defined by the variables. Their reliability coefficients (factors one

through four) were .84, .78, .71, and .74 respectively. The remaining two were weaker, but this is believed to be due to a small number of items loading on the factors. Factor five consisted of only two items, resulting in a reliability coefficient of .61. Factor six consisted of only three items, with a reliability of .62. Carmines and Zeller (1979) report that the addition of more items to a scale will increase the reliability of the measuring instrument, provided those added items do not reduce the average interitem correlation (p. 46). The reliability coefficients of factors three and six would increase if one item was deleted from each; however, due to the exploratory nature of this study, the researchers believed it was inappropriate to delete those items. Rather, additional variables should be created and added to the instrument for future study.

Fourteen of the 28 variables were found to be complex, loading on two factors (one loaded on two additional factors) when the cutoff for factor loadings was set at .32. Setting the cut point at .45 (20% overlapping variance) would have decreased the number of complex variables to five; however, again, the exploratory nature of this study precluded the deletion of those items from those factors.

Discussion

The University of Texas at El Paso is currently reviewing its educational administration masters degree/principal preparation program in order to determine how it aligns with the *Learner-Centered Proficiencies for Administrators* adopted by the Texas State Board of Education in 1994. These six proficiencies are as follows:

- *Learner-Centered Leadership:* Through inspiring leadership, the administrator maximizes learning for all students while maintaining professional ethics and personal integrity.

- *Learner-Centered Climate:* The administrator establishes a climate of mutual trust and respect which enables all members of the learning community to seek and attain excellence.
- *Learner-Centered Curriculum and Instruction:* The administrator facilitates the implementation of a sound curriculum and appropriate instructional strategies designed to promote optimal learning for all students.
- *Learner-Centered Professional Development:* The administrator demonstrates a commitment to student learning through a personal growth plan and fosters the professional development of all staff in the learning community.
- *Equity in Excellence for All Learners:* The administrator promotes equity in excellence for all by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity among students and staff while building on shared values and other similarities that bond all people.
- *Learner-Centered Communication:* The administrator effectively communicates the learning community's vision as well as its policies and successes in interaction with staff, students, parents, community members, and the media (Texas Education Agency, 1995).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) produced these proficiencies believing that the competencies incorporated within the domains would create more effective school leaders. However, these researchers believed it was very important to compare the perceptions of TEA with those of practicing school administrators. From the Delphi process, twenty-eight items were identified by the practicing administrators as being necessary components of an effective principal preparation program. These items were grouped into three categories by the researchers: *Increase of Knowledge*, *Formation of Attitudes and Values*, and *Development of*

Skills. However, the factor analysis produced six categories which the researchers labeled: Factor One (F_1): *Technical Skills Influenced by Human Relations*; Factor Two (F_2): *Technical Skills Influenced by Legal Mandates*; Factor Three (F_3): *Creating the Inviting Culture*; Factor Four (F_4): *Building Community*; Factor Five (F_5): *Ethics in Practice*; and Factor Six (F_6): *Understanding Relationships*.

A comparison of the categories described by TEA's *Learner-Centered Proficiencies for Administrators*, and those which emerged from the Delphi process and the factors from the statistical analysis of the Effective Principal Preparation Survey indicates that TEA's approach provides a broad umbrella of school leadership issues under which particular skills can be tucked. TEA's *Learner-Centered (LC) Leadership* description specifically mentions professional ethics and personal integrity; *LC Equity* also speaks of respect and building on shared values. Both these proficiencies incorporate factor five (*Ethics in Practice*) in their definitions, and all fit with category two from the Delphi process, *Formation of Attitudes and Values*. Factor four, *Building Community*, parallels *LC Communication* which states that the administrator can effectively communicate the learning community's vision as well as its policies and successes when interacting with all people, including parents and community members. The *Increase of Knowledge* Delphi category incorporates portions of *LC Leadership*, *LC Climate*, and *LC Curriculum & Instruction*. Factor six, *Understanding Relationships*, fits well with parts of *LC Leadership*, *LC Climate*, and *LC Professional Development*. Therefore, although the categories are arranged differently, there is considerable overlap and agreement regarding the issues. While the *Learner-Centered Proficiencies for Administrators* provide a broad framework to undergird curriculum development, the Delphi process and factor analysis contribute more concrete

information which can help guide the redesign of the principal preparation program. The authors recognize, however, that this study was limited to addressing only the perceptions of practicing administrators. The gathering of data from other concerned stakeholder groups is an important piece for future research.

It is interesting to note that of the six factors extracted from the practicing administrators' data, the greatest amount of variance (30.5%) was explained by F_1, *Technical Skills Influenced by Human Relations*, followed by F_2 (7.7%), *Technical Skills Influenced by Legal Mandates*. Together, the technical skills factors accounted for 38.2% of the total variance, incorporating 14 of the 28 items on the survey. These areas of expertise are taught in most traditional principal preparation programs. They easily lend themselves to the format of measurable objectives and listings in scope and sequence manuals, as they are tangible skills which can be described and modeled by an instructor.

The remaining 19.7% of the variance is explained by F_3, *Creating the Inviting Culture* (5.6% of the variance); F_4, *Building Community* (5.3%); F_5, *Ethics in Practice* (4.6%); and F_6, *Understanding Relationships* (4.2%). Factors three through six incorporate those leadership qualities which are difficult to grasp and therefore difficult to teach--they seem to have an almost elusive quality about them. Principals must consistently draw on these qualities as they encounter the ever-evolving, unpredictable, uncertain, and risky situations of their daily professional lives; and yet, these leadership capabilities are rarely developed through the typical format of lecture coursework.

The principalship, therefore, is the art of leadership in an atmosphere of chaos. TEA, through the *Learner-Centered Proficiencies for Administrators*, presents its ideal of what

effective principals should be doing. The agency suggests that principal preparation programs emphasize the six *Learner-Centered Proficiencies* in an equitable manner. The Delphi process used in this study, however, reveals the reality of principals' lives as being immersed in the technical aspects of their jobs. The skills defined by the first two factors, the technical factors, are more easily presented within the traditional academic environment, for they are skills with a logical sequence for acquisition--they are tangible and easily viewed as straightforward processes. The other domains identified by factors three, four, five, and six (*Culture, Community, Ethics*, and *Relationships*) contain competencies recognized by principals as important, though the emphasis placed on these skills is diminished in comparison to factors one and two. Perhaps principals focus on the technical skills because their preparation programs emphasized that particular content. Or, perhaps they are simply reacting to the daily requirements of the job. These researchers assert that if preparation programs would consciously develop those "intangibles" embodied in factors three through six; proactive, rather than reactive, behavior might become the norm for educational leaders.

It is apparent that university principal preparation programs need to tackle the concepts inherent in factors three through six, for those "intangibles may be the most significant qualities in how individuals lead" (Cambron-McCabe, 1993). There are no sure-fire formulas, no foolproof methods, to teach the leadership qualities embedded in factors three through six. Competencies in these areas are currently learned on the job--predominately by experience. However, alternative pedagogical methods could provide the impetus for professional growth in these areas. There are ways to create more authentic learning environments in the formal academic setting that will more realistically approach situations which actually occur in schools.

Current Promising Practices and Future Directions

The insights derived from the research presented in this paper, and also from inquiry presently underway at the University of Texas at El Paso, suggest several things. First, we must reexamine the ways in which people are prepared to step into the critical role of the principalship and other leadership positions in schools. The past ten to fifteen years might easily be classified as an era of reform in educational administration, with the recognition that more must be learned about the effectiveness of preservice preparation programs offered across the nation. This is true, even though commendable efforts by nationally recognized organizations seem to have recently lost energy--associations such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, the Danforth Foundation Principal Preparation Initiative, and reform leadership programs started in numerous individual states.

Second, the changing face of American society provides us with an incentive to look very carefully at whether or not leaders are now made ready for the diverse populations of American schools. Will principals be prepared to face the educational challenges in California, with its multicultural and multilingual populations; the industrial midwest and northeast, with similar concerns as large percentages of their population now derive from nations formerly part of the Soviet Union; and the desert southwest, with rapid growth due largely to in-migration from Mexico and Central America? The research presented in this paper might serve as a model for the kind of activity which could periodically focus discussions among program planners and curriculum developers working in agencies that prepare people to become school leaders. In short, do long standing visions of what constitutes the knowledge base, which guides the formation of future principals, reflect the realities of current practice? Seeking a broad base of

input from practitioners in the field, as well as stakeholders in communities, through the use of the research described here may have considerable value.

Finally, if there is to be an implementation of programs based on the insights regarding program content described in this paper, it is likely that structural and conceptual changes in preservice preparation for school administrators may be warranted in the future. There is a clear implication present in this paper, for example, that traditional images of "appropriate" curricula for school administration programs--the conventional view of collecting a large number of independent courses such as school law, finance, supervision, an "intro" course, etc.--may have to be changed. The responses of practitioners noted here suggest that the business of running schools is a complex phenomenon, one which will require a careful consideration of the ways in which broad themes (e.g., "Understanding Relationships") can be addressed in a more holistic fashion than simply requiring aspiring principals to sign up for a course in "human factors in education." What those who participated in this study seemed to be saying is that there must be a careful construction of broad and inclusive content areas. Dealing with some of the issues now faced by school principals requires skills not neatly tucked into traditional courses. When a parent with limited English proficiency walks into a principal's office to demand that his or her child (with a similar lack of English language skills) not be put into a bilingual education class for fear that such a placement might cause unfair labeling, this is not a situation solved by looking at notes from a law class. Nor is the solution found in that three semester hour credit course on "multicultural issues in education" which many states require future principals to take. Instead, the issue of dealing with the parent demanding attention to their child's needs calls for a full range of knowledge, skills, and personal values which are not often found in university courses. In this

way, the findings of the research reported here are quite consistent with recommendations made by others with an interest in the refinement of leadership development programs in recent years. Consistent with this observation, the following changes might be noted regarding needed reform of the content of administrator preparation programs:

1. Preparation programs should be directed toward assisting individuals to appreciate the need for moral and ethical leadership behavior (Barnett, McQuarrie, & Norris, 1991).
2. Aspiring leaders need to learn how to work effectively with adult learners, and principles of adult learning must guide practice in preparation programs (Achilles, 1987).
3. The curriculum of programs should be designed to be coherent, integrative, and sequenced in a logical fashion (Achilles, 1987).
4. Greater emphasis should be placed on assisting aspiring educational leaders in learning more about teaching and learning processes in their schools (Daresh, 1996).

Tied to the need to develop greater insights and sensitivity into the curricular foci of principal preparation programs is a concomitant need to look at the way in which the desired content is delivered. In fact, there may be some reason to believe that *how* people learn about leadership may have a direct relationship on *what* they will do as leaders. Consider, for example, the following list of strategies for program development in educational leadership which have been identified largely through the era of program reform alluded to earlier. Researchers and others have suggested that people will be more effectively prepared for leadership roles if these recommendations are followed:

1. Attention ought to be directed toward finding ways to increase the amount of clinical learning available to participants in preparation programs (Milstein, Bobroff, & Restine, 1991).

2. Experienced administrators should be recruited and trained to serve as mentors to aspiring leaders (Daresh & Playko, 1989).
3. Students of administration should proceed toward their goals in cohorts.
4. Reflective skills are needed on the part of aspiring (and practicing) school administrators (Hart, 1991).
5. Authentic assessment techniques, including portfolio review, should be utilized as a way to track student progress and development in preparation programs.

The key to making use of any of these refinements (content or delivery) in professional preparation programs for school leaders must be based on a sincere desire to develop programs which integrate a number of instructional techniques and needed content revisions. Too often, there have been piecemeal attempts to "improve" administrator preparation by simply adding a new course or two to existing programs. Or, suddenly, students were admitted into principal preparation programs as members of cohorts--without any effort being made to reflect on the nature of the curriculum provided to the newly admitted cohorts. Such disconnected practices will never have the desired impact on program quality. If the only product of the research described in this paper is to create a new required course reflecting some of the identified skills for effective principals, the research will not have achieved a desired goal. Rather, it is the assumption of the researchers that our work has begun a process calling for the identification of specific skills, knowledge, and values that can be incorporated into a large vision of more effective leadership development. After all, changing words does not change practice by itself.

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Appendix

Principal Preparation Program Survey

Based on feedback received from a group of practicing administrators in the El Paso area, the following three categories have been identified as necessary components of an effective principal preparation program. In your opinion, how important is it to include each of the following items in such a program? Please use the following scale in making your assessment, completely filling the bubble you select.

1 = Irrelevant 2 = Not Critical 3 = Somewhat Important 4 = Critical 5 = Extremely Critical

Part I: Increase of Knowledge

Understanding how current educational trends and issues impact change in organizations.

Understanding ways in which reflective practice develops healthy organizations.

Understanding how stakeholders' core values/attitudes affect their conceptualizations of educational issues.

Understanding those underlying principles which drive state mandated evaluation and assessment. (Example: faculty--PDAS, students--TAAS).

Understanding the impact of developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices on student learning.

Part II: Formation of Attitudes and Values

Behaving in ways consistent with one's personal values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Fostering respect for life-long learning.

Promoting ethical practices.

Creating a community of learners.

Part III: Development of Skills

Articulating vision.

Building community and parental involvement.

Working effectively with adults.

Resolving conflict.

Forming/working with teams.

Conducting a meeting.

Implementing site-based management.

Working with the marginal teacher.

Identifying the special population student.

Managing an office.

Building master schedules.

Employing effective communication techniques.

Ensuring stakeholder involvement with the school mission.

Planning strategically for future needs and growth.

Integrating student learning styles with appropriate pedagogical methods.

Correlating state mandated outcomes (example: TEKS) with curriculum.

Applying educational law to specific situations.

Maintaining effective discipline throughout the campus.

Using technology and other tools to successfully manage time.

Part IV: Demographic Information (For years of experience, please count this school year as a complete year).

Ethnicity	Year of Birth	Years Spent As A Classroom Teacher	Years Spent in the Assistant Principalship	Years Spent in the Principalship
African-American	19☐☐			
Asian				
Hispanic				
White/Non-Hispanic				
Other				

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Table II: Factor Loadings, Communalities (h^2), and Percents of Variance for Principal Components Extraction and Varimax Rotation on the *Effective Principal Preparation Survey*

Item	F_1	F_2	F_3	F_4	F_5	F_6	h^2	Alpha Coefficient
Conducting a meeting	.67	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.63	.84
Managing an office	.63	.47	.00	.00	.00	.00	.67	
Implementing site-based management	.59	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.59	
Integrating student learning styles with appropriate pedagogical methods	.59	.00	.37	.00	.00	.00	.55	
Forming/working with teams	.56	.00	.00	.00	.00	.36	.49	
Planning strategically for future needs and growth	.55	.00	.00	.00	.33	.00	.53	
Identifying the special population student	.51	.47	.00	.00	.00	.00	.52	
Employing effective communication techniques	.51	.00	.00	.39	.00	.00	.52	
Applying educational law to specific situations	.00	.76	.00	.00	.00	.00	.67	.78
Understanding those underlying principles which drive state mandated evaluation and assessment (Ex. faculty/PDAS, student/TAAS)	.00	.63	.00	.00	.00	.00	.54	
Maintaining effective discipline throughout the campus	.00	.61	.00	.00	.00	.00	.54	
Building master schedules	.44	.61	.00	.00	.00	.00	.66	
Using technology and other tools to successfully manage time	.44	.47	.00	.00	.00	.00	.50	
Correlating state mandated outcomes with curriculum (ex. TEKS)	.39	.44	.00	.39	.00	.00	.51	
Understanding the impact of developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices on student learning	.00	.00	.72	.32	.00	.00	.69	.71
Understanding how current educational trends and issues impact change in organizations	.00	.00	.71	.00	.00	.00	.61	
Understanding ways in which reflective practice develops healthy organizations	.00	.00	.67	.00	.36	.00	.66	
Understanding how stakeholders' core values/attitudes affect their conceptualizations of educational issues	.00	.00	.55	.00	.37	.00	.52	
Creating a community of learners	.00	.00	.00	.65	.00	.00	.58	.74
Ensuring stakeholder involvement with the school mission	.52	.00	.00	.54	.00	.00	.61	
Building community and parental involvement	.00	.00	.00	.53	.00	.00	.49	
Fostering respect for life long learning	.00	.00	.00	.52	.49	.00	.62	
Articulating vision	.45	.00	.00	.45	.00	.00	.53	
Behaving in ways consistent with one's personal values, attitudes, and beliefs	.00	.00	.00	.00	.75	.00	.63	.61
Promoting ethical practices	.00	.00	.00	.00	.65	.00	.58	
Resolving conflict	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.79	.70	.62
Working effectively with adults	.00	.00	.00	.32	.00	.73	.66	
Working with the marginal teacher	.00	.00	.00	.00	.38	.41	.39	
Percent of Variance	30.5	7.7	5.6	5.3	4.6	4.2		
Cronbach's Alpha for Entire Scale								.92

F_1 Technical Skills Influenced by Human Relations

F_2 Technical Skills Influenced by Legal Mandates

F_3 Creating the Inviting Culture

F_4 Building Community

F_5 Ethics in Practice

F_6 Understanding Relationships

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